



NORTH
KANSAS CITY
SCHOOLS

est. 1913

Educational Programs – Dr. Paul Fregeau, Executive Director – 816.413.5485

October 13, 2009

Gladstone, MO 64119

Re: Request for Reconsideration of Materials

Dear]

Please accept this letter as the formal notification of the result of your request for reconsideration regarding “One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies”. Per board policy, KLB-AP, a committee met on October 7, 2009 for the purpose of reviewing a request for reconsideration of materials.

The committee convened and deliberated the educational merit and age appropriateness of the book, One of Those Hideous Books Where the Mother Dies, by Sonya Sones.

The committee considered the following options:

- Retained without restriction.
- Retained with restriction.
- Not retained.

Committee members reviewed the district “Instructional Materials” policy. Members concentrated on “judging the material as a whole, taking into account the purpose of the material rather than individual and isolated expressions or incidents of the work. Reviews were obtained from multiple sources.

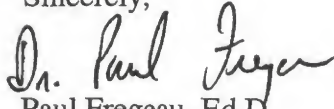
The Reconsideration Committee reached consensus to **“retain without restriction”** based upon the above information.

Please understand the committee has reviewed your request thoroughly and I hope you can appreciate the position it took in regards to this request. If you would like to appeal this decision you would need to submit a letter within five business days to:

The Superintendent of Schools
North Kansas City Schools
2000 N.E. 46th Street
Kansas City, MO 64116

Thank you for following the proper process and making us aware of your concerns. If you have any questions, please call me at (816) 413-5485.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Paul Fregeau".

Paul Fregeau, Ed.D.

Executive Director

Educational Programs

Pc: Dr. Todd White, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Jill Smith, Library Media Coordinator

Master

RECEIVED

SEP 14 2009

Educational Support Services

FILE: KLB-AF
Critical

PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS REGARDING DISTRICT
INSTRUCTIONAL/MEDIA/LIBRARY MATERIALS
(Request for Reconsideration of Materials)

Author: Sanya Sones

Format: _____

Title: One of those hideous books where the mother dies

Publisher (if known): _____

Request Initiated By: (other)

Telephone: _____

City: Gladstone Mo. Zip: 64119

E-mail Address: _____

1. Did you read or view the entire book or material? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If not, what parts did you read or view? Please be specific--cite page numbers.

2. What are your specific objections to the educational use of this material?
After carefully reading the book, some of the things
that are in it al do not feel it is a book for
middle school kids. alt is a good book but like
al said it is not appropriate material.

3. What would you like your library/school to do about this work?
- ☐ Do not assign/lend it to my child: _____
- ☒ Return it to the staff selection committee/department for re-evaluation.
- ☐ Other, please explain: _____

Signature: _____ Date: 8-3-09

To make it a little easier al have printed some of
the pages.

Ray

He wasn't the first boy I ever kissed.
But he was the first boy I ever *liked* kissing.

All the other ones,
not that there were exactly hundreds,
just seemed to want to ram their tongues
down my throat to distract me from noticing
what their hands were trying to do.

But it was different with Ray.
Right from the start.
When *he* kissed me
it seemed as though he was doing it
because he actually *liked* me.
Not just because he was horny.

It was as if he was trying to show me
how he *felt* about me with those kisses of his.

I sure miss that guy.
I miss the way he always tosses
his black curls off his forehead.
I miss the way he presses his thumb
into my palm when he holds my hand.
I miss the way his chocolate eyes melt right into mine
whenever he smiles at me.

There's a hole in my heart bigger than Texas.
Over which, coincidentally,
we happen to be flying at this very moment.

Three Wishes

I wish Ray was on this plane with me.
I wish we were on our way to Tahiti.
I wish we were the only two passengers
and—

Oh my God!
It's *him*!

He's slipping through the first-class curtain,
passing right by me with this big grin on his face,
motioning for me to meet him at the back of the plan

I manage to levitate over the sleeping giant next to m
and float down the aisle right into Ray's arms.

He wraps me into a hug so hot
that I practically burst into flames.

We slip into the bathroom,
and lock the door.
Then, without even saying a word,
we start kissing.

And we kiss and kiss and kiss
until I can feel his kisses running all through me.
And now he's starting to unbutton my shirt and—
that's when I wake up.

No!
I don't want any honey-roasted peanuts.



I Didn't Want to Get on This Plane

But now I don't want to get off it.

I gather up my stuff in slow motion
and make myself follow
the sumo wrestler down the aisle,
past the flight attendants standing by the cockpit,
grinning and nodding at me
like those bobble-head dogs
that people stick on the
dashboards of their cars.

I force myself to step through
the gaping steel jaw of the doorway,
and inch down the corridor of doom,
balancing on the tightrope
of dirty gray carpet,
painfully aware that every step I take
is leading me
closer and closer

to the sperm donor himself.

There He Is

The

Whip Logan.

In three whole dimensions.

I don't know whether
to ask him for his autograph,
kick him in the balls,

or run.





Colette's Tour

Well, let's just say
it's a wee bit more extensive
than the tour that the dean took me on.

First,
she shows me the spot behind the gym
where everyone goes
to sneak cigarettes between classes.
(I happen to think smoking's disgusting,
but decide it would be unwise
to divulge this information to my tour guide.)

Next,
she points out a tangled mess of weeds,
maybe twenty feet wide by forty feet long,
and informs me that it's
the organic vegetable garden.

She says there's a patch down at the far end
where a guy named Bing is growing some pot
that's so amazing it's not even funny.
He supposedly has the farming teacher
convinced it's a rare species of mint.
But the word on the street is that it's more like
a don't-ask-don't-tell kind of thing,
because Bing lets the guy "help with the harvest,"
if I know what she means.

Then,
before I even have a chance to stop reeling from shock,



she points out the spot
where the coke dealer hangs at lunch,
as though *every* school has one.

After that,
she walks me past the two best places
for making out on campus,
introducing me, along the way,
to an enterprising senior named Lolita
(Lolita?)
who sells term papers.

And finally,
she points to a door
that's been painted to look like a starry sky,
behind which our Dream Interpretation class
apparently meets.

Whoa.

Whoa.

If I was a coked-out nympho
stoner cheat who smoked a pack a day,
I'd think I'd died and gone to heaven.



So, Fritz

What do you think I should be?

The monkey?

The man?

The nice, warm, dry hand?

The cage?

The howl?

Or the banana?



Doing Gestalt Therapy on Myself Seems So Lame

But, heck.

I wouldn't mind having

an epiphany of my very own.

So I guess I'll try *being* the banana.

I feel like an absolute idiot doing this,
but here goes:

I am the banana.

I am the banana

and the monkey is eating me.

The monkey is devouring me,
bite by bite.

I am disappearing
into the stomach of the monkey.

I am disappearing.

I am being digested.

I am turning into shit.

My *life* is turning into shit.

My life is shitty?

Geez, what's *that* supposed to be?

An epooophany?

Tell me something I *don't* know.



I'm Heading into the Cafeteria

When for some unknown reason
Colette grabs my hand,
and leads me away from the throngs
to sit together on a bench by the pot garden.
Just the two of us.
Like I'm one of the inner circle or something.

And in two seconds flat, we're talking about sex.
She tells me that none of her friends are virgins.
"You're considered a freak around here
if you haven't lost your virginity
by the time you turn fifteen," she says.
"They don't call it El Lay for nothing."

She says she lost hers
with a mega-famous movie star's son.
She tells me the name of his father,
but makes me swear not to tell a soul.
She says they did it in his pool house during a party.
"It only took about a minute," she says.
"It was over so fast it wasn't even funny."

"Did you love him?" I ask.
She looks startled. "Yeah. I guess.
Yeah. Sure. Why else?" she says with a shrug.
Then, suddenly, she asks me how far I've gone.
Can she be trusted
with such highly classified information?



I take a deep breath.
Then I confess: "Only to second base."
Her eyebrows shoot up.
"But when you did that improv," she says,
"you seemed so . . . I don't know . . .
so . . . experienced."

"Well, my boyfriend Ray wanted to go further,"
I tell her. "*Much* further.
But I guess I wasn't ready."
I feel my face turn three shades of pink.
"Oh God," I moan. "I feel so backward,
so completely infantile telling you that."

But Colette just laughs.
"Don't be silly. You're not from El Lay.
Besides, take it from me:
You aren't missing a thing."
"You're right," I say. "I'm missing a *thingy*."
And both of us crack up.

I hope she's wrong about sex, though.



Because If and When I Decide to Go All the Way

I don't want it to be like it was for Colette.
With somebody that she didn't even care about.
Just to get rid of her virginity.
Like it was dandruff, for chrissake,
and sex was *Head & Shoulders*.

I know this sounds incredibly lame,
but I don't want losing my virginity
to feel like I'm *losing* something.
I want it to feel like I'm *finding* something.
I want sex to be amazing.
I want it to be life-alteringly wonderful.
And I want it to happen with someone I love.

I love Ray.
I really do.
Only I don't know if I love him *enough*.

Oh, maybe I should just quit fighting it
and do it with him when he comes out at Thanksgiving.
But what if we do it and I don't like it?
What if we do it and I love it?
Won't that make it even harder
to be living so far away from him?

What if we do it and then he just dumps me?
Like my father did to my mother.

Mom used to say that I should wait until I was married.
But a fat lot of good that did *her*.



Dear Mom,

How are things in Kingdom Come? ☺ I just checked my e-mail box. Except for the usual "Returned mail: Host unknown" message (and one very tempting offer to have my penis enlarged) it was empty. *Again*. Obviously, I didn't expect *you* to write to me, but I hoped that Lizzie would. She hasn't e-mailed me for like four days. Has she forgotten all about me? I sure haven't forgotten about *her*. Or you. I've been thinking about you a lot lately, Mom. I've been thinking about how pissed I am at you. Pissed at you for dying. Pissed at you for leaving me. Pissed at you for wrecking my whole entire life.

In fact, I'm so pissed at you right now, that I'd be wishing you were dead, if you weren't dead already.

Love u 4 Ever
(but *hate* you today),
Ruby

CHECKLIST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
FICTION & OTHER LITERARY FORMS

Title One of Those Licious Books Where the Brother Dies
Author Sones, Sonja
Format print book

Purpose

1. What is the overall purpose, theme, or message of the material? *wordplay, overcoming problems, authentic forgiveness, redemption,*
2. Is the purpose accomplished? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. If the story is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
Suitable for: children Young adults
If both were marked no, for what age group would you recommend? _____
4. Will reading, viewing and/or listening to the material result in a greater understanding of human beings? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
5. Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various minority groups? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
6. Are any questionable elements of the story an integral part of a worthwhile theme or message?
☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

Content

1. Does the material give a realistic picture of life as it is now? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA *high interest*
2. Does the story avoid an oversimplified view of life? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
3. When factual information is part of the story, is it presented accurately?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
4. Are concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential reader/viewer/listener? ☒ Yes ☐ No
5. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and section of the country in which they live? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
6. Does the material offend in some special way the sensibilities of women or a minority group by the way it presents either the chief character or any of the minor characters? ☐ Yes ☒ No
7. Are there excessive instances with sex, violence, cruelty, brutality, and/or aberrant behavior that would make this material inappropriate? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ NA
Suitable for: Children Young adults
8. Is the language appropriate to the purpose of the material? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
9. Does the material give a broader understanding of human behavior without stressing differences of class, race, color, sex, education, religion, or philosophy in any way? ☒ Yes ☐ No

**CHECKLIST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
FICTION & OTHER LITERARY FORMS**

10. Does the material make a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas?
____ Yes ____ No ☒ NA
11. Are the illustrations realistic in relation to the story? ____ Yes ____ No ☒ NA
12. Are the illustrations appropriate and in good taste? ____ Yes ____ No ☒ NA
13. Is the material well written or produced? ☒ Yes ____ No

Reviews

1. Review sources: see attached

Favorably reviewed yes Unfavorably reviewed _____

2. Does this title appear on award lists? ____ Yes ____ No

If so, which lists? _____

Additional comments

Recommendation by Review Committee:

- ☒ Retain without restriction
☐ Retain with restriction
☐ Do not retain

Date 10/7/09

Signature of Review Committee Members

Ann Bradley
Laura Whitaker
Charles A. Chase
Kathleen Standen

BAC

One of those hideous books where the mother dies

by Sones, Sonya.

Title Details

Title: One of those hideous books where the mother dies / Sonya Sones.

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, p2004, c2004

ISBN-13: 978-0-689-85820-8

LCCN: 2003009355

ISBN-10: 0-689-85820-5

Dewey: -Fic-

Classifications: Fiction

Interest Level: YA

Included in These Sets/Series: Florida - Pinellas County High Sch. Battle of the Book 2006-

Reviews & Awards

Wilson's Senior High School 10/01/07

School Library Journal starred 08/01/04

Booklist starred 05/01/04

Library Media Connection starred 02/01/05

Publishers Weekly 06/21/04

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books 07/01/04

Voice of Youth Advocates (V.O.Y.A.) 10/01/04

Kirkus Review 05/01/04

Full-Text Reviews

Booklist starred (May 1, 2004 (Vol. 100, No. 17))

Gr. 7-12. After the death of her mother, high-schooler Ruby is sent from Boston to L.A. to live with the father she has never met: "He's such a scumbag / that he divorced my mother / before I was even born." The "scumbag" is Whip Logan, a famous movie actor, but Ruby is too angry to be impressed; at the airport she wonders whether to "ask him for his autograph, / or kick him in the balls." Sones' latest free-verse novel follows Ruby through her first few months in her new home, a mansion where her every desire is granted--except what she longs for most: her best friend, her boyfriend, and of course, her mother. Sones' novel is an unusual combination of over-the-top Hollywood fairy tale and sharp, honest story about overcoming grief. Teens may predict the novel's surprises long before Ruby discovers them, including a revelation about Whip's sexuality, and, as in every fairy tale, many things are too good to be true--especially Whip's eager devotion and celebrity. It's Ruby's first-person voice--acrimonious, raw, and very funny--that pulls everything together, whether she is writing e-mails to her deceased mother, attending Dream Analysis class at a private L.A. high school, or finally learning to accept her father and embrace a new life. A satisfying, moving novel that will be a winner for both eager and reluctant readers.

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Horn Book (Fall 2004)

After her mother dies, Ruby is forced to move to LA to live with her movie star father, whom she doesn't know and--despite his sincere efforts to win her over--doesn't want to get to know. Sones's window on the celebrity lifestyle offers readers a guilty pleasure, but Ruby's cynical stance grows tiresome in this predictable free verse novel.

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Kirkus Review (May 1, 2004)

In a story worthy of Hollywood, 15-year-old Ruby moves to LA to join her estranged father, the movie star Whip Logan, when her mother dies. The grieving Ruby, given the fulfillment of many a teen's fantasies, is nothing but sullen at being wrenched away from her Boston home and friends and plunked into the middle of the celebrity district of Beverly Hills with a father she's never known. Short, stream-of-consciousness free-verse poems make up most of the narrative, by turns bathing readers in Ruby's emotions and treating them to very sharp, very funny observations about LA. It's a hugely artificial form, but its free acknowledgment thereof ("my life better not turn out to be like one of those hideous books where the mother dies and so the girl has to go live with her absentee father . . .") allows the text, and Ruby, to explore the possibilities behind the fantasy. Ruby's eventual adjustment and her rapprochement with her father (cue the violins) will come as no surprise to readers but, hey--this is Hollywood after all, and sometimes a happy ending is exactly what we need. (Fiction. 12+)

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Library Media Connection (February 2005)

Ruby Milliken's whole life has just changed. Her mother raised her alone, never telling her about her father. However, Ruby's aunt secretly took her to films to show her who her father is--Whip Logan, movie star. When Ruby's mother dies, Ruby is sent from the East coast to Beverly Hills to live with her father, leaving behind her aunt, best friend, and boyfriend. Grieving for her mother, lonely for her East Coast life, and angry that her father never was there, the only person Ruby connects with is Whip's

assistant/trainer, Max. When a boy at her school dies and an earthquake almost kills Ruby by toppling a bookcase onto her bed, Whip reveals just how involved he has been in her life with a scrapbook he has kept about her. Whip explains why her mother wanted him to have no contact with her-he is gay and Max is revealed as his partner. As clues and bits of memories snap into place, Ruby knows he has always been there for her. Each new verse adds a clue about Whip's role in Ruby's life and could be used to illustrate foreshadowing. It is a quick and easy read and would be good for reluctant readers, as well as budding poets. Highly Recommended. Lee Gordon, Librarian, Sierra Vista High School, Las Vegas, Nevada

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Publishers Weekly (January 2, 2006)

PW called this story of a 15-year-old who must move from Boston to L.A. after her mother's untimely death a "winning portrayal of a teenage girl's loves and losses." Ages 12-up. (Nov.) Copyright 2006 Reed Business Information.

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Publishers Weekly (June 21, 2004)

This winning portrayal of a teenage girl's loves and losses, written in Sones's (What My Mother Doesn't Know) signature free-verse style, opens as 15-year-old Ruby is en route from Boston to L.A. ("Hell A" as she calls it). Following her mother's untimely death (in a poem called "Maybe You're Wondering About It," Ruby furiously says, "But that's just tough./ Because I'm not even going to go in/ to how she died"), Ruby leaves behind her best friend Lizzie and her boyfriend Ray, to live with a father she's never met. Whip Logan, a famous actor, seems anxious to kindle a relationship; however, when Ruby meets him, she thinks: "I don't know whether/ to ask him for his autograph,/ kick him in the balls,/ or run." The scene in California proves "deeply surreal": neighbor Cameron Diaz pops over, Brad Pitt grins at her in the local bookstore, and at the high school she enrolls in "Dream Interpretation Through the Ages." The only person Ruby feels comfortable with is her father's live-in "assistant/slash personal trainer," Max, whom Ruby believes is gay. Sones gives the audience clear signals of what Ruby can't allow herself to take in. Readers will accept some melodrama because, even with a few contrivances, Ruby's voice conveys genuine emotions. Ages 12-up. (May) Copyright 2004 Reed Business Information.

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School Library Journal (August 1, 2004)

Gr 7-10-In one- to two-page breezy poetic prose-style entries, 15-year-old Ruby Milliken describes her flight from Boston to California and her gradual adjustment to life with her estranged movie-star father following her mother's death. E-mails to her best friend, her boyfriend, and her mother ("in heaven") and outpourings of her innermost thoughts display her overwhelming unhappiness and feelings of isolation, loss, and grief ("...most days,/I wander around Lakewood feeling invisible./Like I'm just a speck of dust/floating in the air/that can only be seen/when a shaft of light hits it"). Ruby's affable personality is evident in her humorous quips and clever wordplays. Her depth of character is revealed through her honest admissions, poignant revelations, and sensitive insights. This is not just another one of those gimmicky novels written in poetry. It's solid and well written, and Sones has a lot to say about the importance of carefully assessing people and situations and about opening the door to one's own happiness. Despite several predictable particulars of plot, Ruby's story is gripping, enjoyable, and memorable.-Susan Scheps, Shaker Heights Public Library, OH Copyright 2004 Reed Business Information.



NORTH
KANSAS CITY
SCHOOLS

est. 1913

Educational Programs – Dr. Paul Fregeau, Executive Director – 816.413.5485

October 13, 2009

Kansas City, MO 64155

Re: Request for Reconsideration of Materials

Dear :

Please accept this letter as the formal notification of the result of your request for reconsideration regarding "Princess on the Brink". Per board policy, KLB-AP, a committee met on October 7, 2009 for the purpose of reviewing a request for reconsideration of materials.

The committee convened and deliberated the educational merit and age appropriateness of the book, Princess on the Brink, by Meg Cabot.

The committee considered the following options:

- Retained without restriction.
- Retained with restriction.
- Not retained.

Committee members reviewed the district "Instructional Materials" policy. Members concentrated on "judging the material as a whole, taking into account the purpose of the material rather than individual and isolated expressions or incidents of the work. Reviews were obtained from multiple sources.

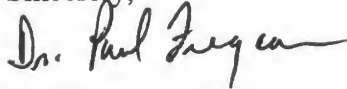
The Reconsideration Committee reached consensus to "retain without restriction" based upon the above information.

Please understand the committee has reviewed your request thoroughly and I hope you can appreciate the position it took in regards to this request. If you would like to appeal this decision you would need to submit a letter within five business days to:

The Superintendent of Schools
North Kansas City Schools
2000 N.E. 46th Street
Kansas City, MO 64116

Thank you for following the proper process and making us aware of your concerns. If you have any questions, please call me at (816) 413-5485.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Paul Fregeau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Dr.", "Paul", and "Fregeau" being capitalized and prominent.

Paul Fregeau, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Educational Programs

Pc: Dr. Todd White, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Jill Smith, Library Media Coordinator

RECEIVED

Master

SEP 1 6 51 AM
Educational Support Services

FILE: KLB-AF
Critical

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR CONCERNS REGARDING DISTRICT
INSTRUCTIONAL/MEDIA/LIBRARY MATERIALS**
(Request for Reconsideration of Materials)

Author: Meg Cabot
Format: Book
Title: Princess on The Brink
Publisher (if known): Harper Collins
Request Initiated By: _____
Telephone: _____ Address: _____
City: KC Mo Zip: 64155
E-mail Address: _____

1. Did you read or view the entire book or material? ☒ Yes ☐ No
If not, what parts did you read or view? Please be specific--cite page numbers.

2. What are your specific objections to the educational use of this material?

Sexual Content see pages
6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, 48, 49, 40, 50, 77
98, 99, 100, 102, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112
114, 124, 130, 131, 141, 145, 147, 148, 149, 157

3. What would you like your library/school to do about this work?

☐ Do not assign/lend it to my child: _____
☒ Return it to the staff selection committee/department for re-evaluation.
☐ Other, please explain: _____

Signature: _____

Date: 8/30/09

FILE: KLB-AF
Critical

* * * * *

Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or procedures for related information in this administrative area.

Implemented: 02/11/2003

North Kansas City School District, Kansas City, Missouri

**CHECKLIST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
FICTION & OTHER LITERARY FORMS**

Title Princess on the Brink
Author Cabot, Meg
Format print book

Purpose

1. What is the overall purpose, theme, or message of the material? relationships, using sex to manipulate
2. Is the purpose accomplished? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. If the story is fantasy, is it the type that has imaginative appeal? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
Suitable for: children Young adults
If both were marked no, for what age group would you recommend? _____
4. Will reading, viewing and/or listening to the material result in a greater understanding of human beings? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
5. Does it offer an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the aspirations, achievements, and problems of various minority groups? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
6. Are any questionable elements of the story an integral part of a worthwhile theme or message? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

Content

1. Does the material give a realistic picture of life as it is now? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
2. Does the story avoid an oversimplified view of life? ☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ NA
3. When factual information is part of the story, is it presented accurately? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
4. Are concepts presented appropriate to the ability and maturity of the potential reader/viewer/listener? ☒ Yes ☐ No
5. Do characters speak in a language true to the period and section of the country in which they live? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
6. Does the material offend in some special way the sensibilities of women or a minority group by the way it presents either the chief character or any of the minor characters? ☐ Yes ☒ No
7. Are there excessive instances with sex, violence, cruelty, brutality, and/or aberrant behavior that would make this material inappropriate? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
Suitable for: Children Young adults
8. Is the language appropriate to the purpose of the material? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
9. Does the material give a broader understanding of human behavior without stressing differences of class, race, color, sex, education, religion, or philosophy in any way? ☒ Yes ☐ No

**CHECKLIST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
FICTION & OTHER LITERARY FORMS**

10. Does the material make a significant contribution to the history of literature or ideas?
____ Yes ☒ No ____ NA
11. Are the illustrations realistic in relation to the story? ____ Yes ____ No ☒ NA
12. Are the illustrations appropriate and in good taste? ____ Yes ____ No ☒ NA
13. Is the material well written or produced? ____ Yes ☒ No

Reviews

1. Review sources: see attached

Favorably reviewed ☒ Unfavorably reviewed _____

2. Does this title appear on award lists? ____ Yes ☒ No

If so, which lists? _____

Additional comments

parent may request not check to child (son or daughter)

Recommendation by Review Committee:

- ☒ Retain without restriction
☐ Retain with restriction
☐ Do not retain

Date 10/7/09

Signature of Review Committee Members

Ann Bradley
Rayna Whitaker
Shylla A. Chase
Kathleen Stander

[Signature]

YOUTH SERIES FICTION IN BRIEF

Below you will find short, critical reviews of new entries in popular fiction series. Individual entries in fiction series deemed worthy of expanded coverage will receive full reviews in the regular Books for Youth pages.

—Stephanie Zvirin

Baker, E. D. *No Place for Magic*. 2006. 250p. Bloomsbury, \$15.95 (1-58234-654-2). Gr. 5-8.

In this latest installment of the *Tales of the Frog Princess* series, Princess Emma travels with her fiancé, Eardric, to his homeland for their nuptials. Upon arrival, they find that trolls have captured Eardric's little brother. Emma and Eardric head off to rescue him, but things begin to look hopeless after Emma's magical powers are neutralized. Emma encounters a full dictionary of magical creatures in this adventure, which includes some rousing and scary moments stitched together with a humorous, lighthearted spirit. —Todd Morning

Bell, Hilari. *Forging the Sword*. 2006. 512p. Simon & Schuster, \$17.99 (0-689-85416-1). Gr. 7-10.

Bell brings the *Farsala Trilogy* to a rousing conclusion, replete with fierce battles and nerve-wracking incursions into enemy territory by the young heroes who are fighting to save Farsala from becoming part of the Hrum Empire. The author maintains the complexity of her main characters and the intensity of the story line: the Hrum have only a few months, according to their self-imposed time limit, to conquer Farsala or depart the land. An edge-of-the-seat finale for the trilogy's readers. —Sally Estes

Brashares, Ann. *Forever in Blue: The Fourth Summer of the Sisterhood*. Jan. 2007. 384p. Delacorte, \$18.99 (0-385-72936-9). Gr. 8-11.

According to the publisher, this title marks "one last, glorious summer" for the traveling pants, and it's a time of changing identities and growing independence for the Sisterhood. As they discover new talents after their first year of college, the girls face increasingly grown-up dilemmas: an unwanted-pregnancy scare, crushes on married men, malicious co-workers, and questions about how to know if a love is lasting. By summer's end, each realizes that, with or without the pants, she is confident, talented, and lucky to share in such a nurturing lifelong friendship. A strong, satisfying conclusion that won't disappoint fans.

—Gillian Engberg

Cabot, Meg. *Princess on the Brink*. Jan. 2007. 256p. HarperCollins, \$16.99 (0-06-072456-0). Gr. 8-11.

Princess Mia, now a high-school junior, is reeling after her boyfriend, Michael, announces that he is heading to Japan for a year. If

they have sex, will he stay? "To use sex as a means to manipulate someone" goes against Mia's principles, but she considers it anyway. Predictably, surprises and misunderstandings disrupt her plans, and Grandmere is salty and as controversial as ever. "Virginity is no GIFT. You can't even WEAR it." Series fans will enjoy the usual comedy and the larger questions about sex and relationships. —Gillian Engberg

Funke, Cornelia. *Ghosthunters and the Gruesome-Invincible Lightning Ghost*. 2006. 131p. Scholastic/Chicken House, \$16.99 (0-439-84962-4). Gr. 2-4.

The latest in a series of humorous adventures about expert ghost hunter Hetty, her sidekick Tom, and their affiliate ghost, Hugo, this novel offers some unusual characterizations along with nonstop action. Hetty and her crew are called to help solve a haunting problem at a seaside hotel, which requires them to employ everything from crafty detective skills to ghostly slime. Hetty is the brains of the outfit, Tom the spunk, and mischievous Hugo comes through in a pinch. More silly that scary. —Francisca Goldsmith

Jacques, Brian. *Voyage of Slaves: A Tale from the Castaways of the Flying Dutchman*. 2006. 356p. Philomel, \$23.99 (0-399-24549-9). Gr. 5-8.

The third book in *Castaways of the Flying Dutchman* series continues the adventures of Ben and the black Labrador Ned. Guided by the angel who spared them the fate of the *Flying Dutchman's* crew, they find themselves once again being used in heaven's fight against evil. This time they escape from a barbaric pirate and slaver, who relentlessly pursues them. As in *The Angel's Command* (2003), coincidence and fortuitous accidents forward the plot; however, the harrowing action, leavened by humor, makes this yet another riveting tale. —Sally Estes

Lee, Tanith. *Piratica II: Return to Parrot Island*. 2006. 360p. Dutton, \$17.99 (0-525-47769-1). Gr. 7-10.

Art, the young pirate queen who first appeared in *Piratica* (2004), returns for more thrilling open-sea adventures, once again set in an alternate world similar to early-nineteenth-century England. After escaping a death sentence, Art, now a folk hero, lives with her husband in celebrity splendor. Still, her sea legs are restless, and when the government asks her to assist with a war, she dons her pirate gear and heads back to sea. Plot contrivances won't deter readers who love rapid-fire, swash-buckling tales, particularly those in which young women steer the action. —Gillian Engberg

Lenhard, Elizabeth. *Chicks with Sticks: Knit Two Together*. 2006. 272p. Dutton, \$16.99 (0-525-47764-0). Gr. 6-9.

Scottie and her friends, last seen in *Chicks*

with *Sticks: It's a Purl Thing* (2005), are still knitting, though now the stitching takes a backseat to boy-girl interactions. Scottie's relationship with a new guy is the main plot, and although this makes for some fun, light romance, it moves the story in predictable ways, canceling some of the freshness of the first book. The incessant hip chatter will also quickly date the story. The strong link between the girls is the thread that keeps things together, and several patterns will inspire readers attracted by the knitting theme. —Irene Cooper

Nimmo, Jenny. *Emlyn's Moon*. Jan. 2007. 152p. Scholastic, \$9.99 (0-439-84676-5). Gr. 3-5.

The second volume in the *Magician Trilogy* takes up the story two years after the Welsh boy Gwyn discovers his magical powers. Here the focus shifts to Nia, Gwyn's former neighbor. When her family moves from their farm to the nearby town, Nia feels uprooted and lost in the shuffle. As the story develops, an old mystery grows in importance, and the otherworldly element from *The Snow Spider* (2006) again becomes a threatening presence. The book's manageable length, sympathetic characters, and appealing jacket art will lure readers. —Carolyn Phelan

Scieszka, Jon. *Marco? Polo!* Illus. by Adam McCauley. 2006. 80p. Viking, \$14.99 (0-670-06104-2). Gr. 3-5.

The *Time Warp Trio* hits the Silk Road in this new installment: While playing a game of Marco? Polo! at the pool, Joe suddenly finds himself alone in the desert "somewhere between Italy and China," clad only in his swim trunks. Luckily, Marco Polo himself hears Joe's cries for help. One joke—an Asian character named Ding Dong—falls flat into stereotype. That puzzling choice aside, Scieszka continues his formula of absurdity, slapstick puns, and nonstop action that has won the series plenty of fans. —Gillian Engberg

Yep, Laurence. *Tiger Magic*. 2006. 288p. HarperCollins, \$15.99 (0-06-001019-3); lib. ed., \$16.89 (0-06-001020-7). Gr. 4-7.

Part of a secret network of ancient Chinese deities headquartered in his uncle's antique store, Tom gears up for a decisive showdown against evil while raising the precious baby phoenix that imprinted upon him at the end of book two. As Yep crowds ever larger hordes of characters and creatures into the conflict, even series fans will find it difficult to distinguish friend from foe. But the epic dust-ups will thrill action-addicted readers regardless, and most libraries will want to complete the *Tiger's Apprentice* adventures, one of few middle-grade fantasy series with roots in Chinese lore. —Jennifer Mattson

laugh-out-loud funny as well as an intuitive commentary on pop culture and the world of reality TV. Although the text is peppered with British slang, the story will resonate with listeners who sometimes wish that they could trade in their families. Tom Lawrence does a skillful job of portraying Danny and the motley crew of characters in the book. He channels aging rock stars and is dead-on in portraying Queen Elizabeth. Danny's clever commentary and the interviews with his friends and family make the book work well in audio format. An optional purchase for most libraries.—JoAnn Carhart, East Islip Public Library, NY

The Princess Diaries, Vol. 8: Princess on the Brink (unabr.). 5 CDs. 5:16 hrs. Prod. by Listening Library. Dist. by Listening Library/Books on Tape. 2006. ISBN 978-0-7393-4857-4. \$50.

Gr 7-10—Princess Mia is back in another adventure in this popular series. Listeners are treated to Mia's escapades during her junior year in high school. She had hoped that it was going to be her best year yet, but nothing turns out as she planned. Mia is taking a horrific course load, Lilly has signed her up to run for school president again, and she hears that her boyfriend Michael is going to move to Japan for a year...or more! While Mia knows this is an incredible opportunity for him, she thinks she has found a way to make him stay. Mia's life takes some unexpected turns as she tries to stem the tide of disaster. Clea Lewis is, once again, spot on as Princess Mia and her friends with melodramatic teen angst and confusion flowing easily; she nails the adults as well. As Mia matures, so do the situations she faces. With frank exchanges about sex, both with someone and alone, this audiobook is best suited for mature listeners who will eagerly await the next volume.—Stephanie A. Squicciarini, Fairport Public Library, NY

A Small White Scar (unabr.). 4 cassettes or 4 CDs. 4 hrs. Recorded Books. 2006. cassette, ISBN 1-4281-0453-4: \$30.75; CD, ISBN 1-4281-0458-5: \$46.75.

Gr 5-7—Will and Denny are 15-year-old twins living on a cattle ranch in Colorado with their father in the 1940s. Will wants to join the rodeo, but his father expects him to look after his brother, who has Down's Syndrome. While Will loves his brother and shares a special relationship with him, he's made up his mind to leave home and compete in a nearby rodeo. When Denny follows him, Will's frustration and anger mount and, after a medical emergency, Will physically takes out his frustration on the trusting Denny. In the end, Will and his father come to an understanding and the teenager is able to envision a future in which he doesn't have to give up his life for

his brother. The confusion, tension, and conflicting emotions Will displays toward his differently abled brother are brilliantly and poignantly conveyed in this bluntly realistic debut novel (Joanna Cotler Books, 2006) by K.A. Nuzum. Narrator Steven Boyer clearly communicates the conflicted feelings Will has towards his brother. A compelling listen.—B. Allison Gray, John Jermain Memorial Library, Sag Harbor, NY

Twelve (unabr.). 4 CDs. 5 hrs. Scholastic Audiobooks. 2007. ISBN 0-439-02337-8. \$29.95.

Gr 5-7—In Lauren Myracle's sequel (Dutton, 2007) to *Eleven* (Dutton, 2004), Winnie Perry shares her most personal thoughts during the year she turned 12 and started seventh grade in her suburban community. Each month-by-month episode features Winnie, her friends, and her family. It also presents well-selected junior high school crises that middle-school girls will easily relate to such as bra shopping, periods, boys, and friendship issues. Jen Taylor narrates this first-person account with just the right tone, making it obvious when Winnie is rolling her eyes in disgust or speaking in that "whatever" tone listeners will recognize. She gives each character a unique voice. Tween girls will relate to the rites of passage that Winnie faces in this realistic look at teen life. Myracle's "Internet Girls" series, for students in grades 8 to 11, will be the perfect step up as tween listeners mature.—Jane P. Fenn, Coming-Painted Post West High School, NY

Music

Animal Playground. CD, approx. 40 min. Putumayo Kids. 2007. #PUTU 264. \$14.98.

K-Gr 3—Thirteen delightful multilingual, multinational animal songs make up another wonderful collection from the folks at Putumayo. Country, bluegrass, folk, jazz, samba, Brazilian forró, Caribbean, and African musical styles give the album depth and variety. The compilation includes "Animal Crackers" (Wee Hairy Beasts, U.S.), "No More Monkeys" (Asheba, Trinidad), "Nella Vecchia Fattoria" (Quartetto Cetra, Italy), "Aves" (Guillermo Anderson, Honduras), "The Littlest Birds" (The Be Good Tanyas, Canada), "The Three Bears" (Gary Rosen, U.S.), "L'Otorhinocéros" (Les P'tits Loups du Jazz, France), "Don't Ever Step on a Snake" (Don Spencer, Australia), "Mbube" (better known in the U.S. as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," Ladysmith Black Mambazo, South Africa), and more. The enhanced CD also includes an original music video for the song "No More Monkeys," shot on location in Trinidad, featuring both live action and simple animation. A great way to introduce children

to songs from other cultures.—Beverly Bixler, San Antonio Public Library, TX

Hey You Kids! CD, 41 min. Prod. by Doug Snyder. Dist. by AV Café. 2006. \$12.97.

PreS-Gr 3—The Texas-based Jellydof's first national release features 13 original songs, all written and performed by the group consisting of Doug Snyder and a band of his fellow music teachers. The deceptively simple lyrics touch on the common threads of childhood experiences. "Bicycle" is a rousing ode to every child's favorite mode of transportation. "Mr. Cookie" laments the loss of a perfectly good cookie after a child drops it on the ground and tries to wash it off in the sink. Another fun piece is a cover of the Schoolhouse Rock classic, "Three Is a Magic Number." There are several slower-paced songs perfect for those quiet times at the close of the day. For example, "Captain Sleep" captures the shared childhood experience of asking for another glass of water just to put off going to sleep for a few more minutes. The collection concludes with a hauntingly beautiful piece, "My Blanket," that begins "I wish you could be my blanket and follow me to sleep." This CD is fun family listening and would be a welcome addition to public library collections.—Maren Ostergard, King County Library System, Issaquah, WA

Hunk-Ta-Bunk-Ta Wiggle, Vol. 1. CD. 25:36 min. Hunk-Ta-Bunk-Ta. 2007. ISBN 1-892533-08-1. \$15.

PreS—Accompanied by simple percussion and the occasional stringed instruments, Katherine Dines's vocals welcome listeners to participate. Call-and-response songs, such as "Flea Fly Flow Mosquito" and the marching song, "Wave Hi Low," will have even the youngest children joining in. Some of the multicultural songs here ("Funga" and "Pajarito") can be found on previously released recordings, but their place in this movement album is both welcome and appropriate. Also included are "Pat a Cake," "Clickety Clack," "Chomp Chomp Snort Awooo," "Tug a Wiggle," "Bunny Hop," "Itchy Itchy Owie Boo Boo," "The Ticklebug," and "Down in Sleepytown." Appropriate for story times, preschool movement classes, and general listening, this title will be appreciated by those looking to direct a child's energy into appropriate and purposeful movement.—Kirsten Martindale, formerly Menomonie Public Library, WI

Little Miss Ann. CD. 21:32 min. AV Café. 2006. \$12.99.

PreS-Gr 2—Ann Torralba performs the lead vocals on the 10 songs in this collection. She wrote three of the songs ("Hello," "Dance with Your Daddy," and "Moon Jelly"), and plays the guitar, pan flute, tin whistle, and

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Princess on the brink

by Cabot, Meg.

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Full-Text Reviews

Booklist (December 15, 2006 (Vol. 103, No. 8))

Princess Mia, now a high-school junior, is reeling after her boyfriend, Michael, announces that he is heading to Japan for a year. If they have sex, will he stay? "To use sex as a means to manipulate someone" goes against Mia's principles, but she considers it anyway. Predictably, surprises and misunderstandings disrupt her plans, and Grandmere is salty and as controversial as ever: "Virginity is no GIFT. You can't even WEAR it." Series fans will enjoy the usual comedy and the larger questions about sex and relationships.

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Horn Book (Fall 2007)

While both her grandmother and best friend Lilly seem to be doing all they can to make Mia's life difficult, she's spending most of her time stressing about her boyfriend moving to Japan for a year (she even contemplates sleeping with him). This volume in the series is more tightly focused than previous books, allowing Mia a little growth of character.